TALES

:: :: FROM :: ::

BOCCACCIO

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Tales From Boccaccio

BOSTON
The Stratford Company, Publishers
1918

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The STRATFORD CO., Publishers
Boston, Mass.

The Alpine Press, Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

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The Scoundrel Becomes a Saint

"IT is told, that Musciatto Franzesi, being from a very rich and considerable merchant in France become a knight and it behoving him thereupon go into Tuscany with Messire Charles Sansterre, brother to the King of France, who had been required and bidden thither by Pope Boniface, found his affairs in one part and another sore embroiled (as those of merchants most times are), and was unable lightly or promptly to disentangle them; wherefore he bethought himself to commit them unto diverse persons and made shift for all save only he abode in doubt whom he might leave sufficient to the recovery of the credits he had given to certain Burgundians. The cause of his doubt was that he knew the Burgundians to be litigious, quarrelsome fellows, ill-conditioned and disloyal, and could not call one to mind, in whom he might put any trust, curst enough to cope with their perversity. After long consideration of the matter, there came to his memory a certain Master Ciapperello da Prato, who came often to his house in Paris and whom, for that he was little of person and mighty nice in his dress, the French, knowing not what Cepparello meant and thinking it be the same with Cappello, to wit, in their vernacular, Chaplet, called him, not Cappello, but Ciappelletto, and accordingly as Ciappelletto he was known everywhere, whilst few knew him for Master Ciapperello.

Now this said Ciappelletto was of this manner life, that, being a scrivener, he thought very great shame whenas any of his instruments was found (and indeed he drew few such) other than false; whilst of the latter he would have drawn as many as

might be required of him and these with a better will by way of gift than any other for a great wage. False witness he bore with especial delight, required or not required, and the greatest regard being in those times paid to oaths in France, as he recked nothing of forswearing himself, he knavishly gained all the suits concerning which he was called upon to tell the truth upon his faith. He took inordinate pleasure and was mighty diligent in stirring up troubles and enmities and scandals between friends and kinsfolk and whomsoever else, and the greater the mischiefs he saw ensue thereof, the more he rejoiced. If bidden to manslaughter or whatsoever other naughty deed, he went about it with a will, without ever saying nay thereto; and many a time of his proper choice he had been known to wound men and do them to death with his own hand. He was a terrible blasphemer of God and the saints, and that for every trifle, being the most choleric man alive. To church he went never and all the sacraments thereof he flouted in abominable terms, as things of no account; whilst, on the other hand, he was still fain to haunt and use taverns and other lewd places. Of women he was as fond as dogs of the stick; but in the contrary he delighted more than any filthy fellow alive. He robbed and pillaged with as much conscience as a godly man would make oblation to God; he was a very glutton and a great wine bibber, insomuch that bytimes it wrought him shameful mischief, and to boot, he was a notorious gamester and a caster of cogged dice. But why should I enlarge in so many words. He was belike the worst man that ever was born. His wickedness had long been upheld by the power and interest of Messer Musciatto, who had many a time safeguarded him as well from private persons, to whom he often did a mischief, as from the law, against which he was a perpetual offender.

This Master Ciappelletto, then, coming to Musciatto's mind, the latter, who was very well acquainted with his way of life, bethought himself that he should be such an one as the perver-

sity of the Burgundians required and accordingly, sending for him, he bespoke him thus: 'Master Ciappelletto, I am, as thou knowest, about altogether to withdraw hence, and having to do, amongst others, with certain Burgundians, men full of guild, I know none whom I may leave to recover my due from them more fitting than myself, more by token that thou dost nothing at this present; wherefore, an thou wilt undertake this, I will e'en procure thee the favor of the Court and give thee such part as shall be meet of that which thou shalt recover.'

Dan Ciappelletto, who was then out of employ and ill provided with the goods of the world, seeing him who had long been his stay and his refuge about to depart thence, lost no time in deliberation, but, as of necessity constrained, replied that he would well. They being come to an accord, Musciatto departed and Ciappelletto, having gotten his patron's procuration and letters commendatory from the king, betook himself into Burgundy, where well nigh none knew him, and there, contrary to his nature, began courteously and blandly to seek to get in his payments and do what wherefore he was come thither, as if reserving choler and violence for a last resort. Dealing thus and lodging in the house of two Florentines, brothers, who there lent at usance and who entertained him with great honor for the love of Messer Musciatto, it chanced that he fell sick, whereupon the two brothers promptly fetched physicians and servants to tend him and furnished him with all that behoved unto the recovery of his health.

But every succor was in vain, for that, by the physician's report, the good man, who was now old and had lived disorderly, grew daily worse, as one who had a mortal sickness; wherefore the two brothers were sore concerned and one day, being pretty near the chamber where he lay sick, they began to take counsel, together saying one to the other, 'How shall we do with yonder fellow? We have a sorry bargain on our hands of his affair, for that to send him forth of our house, thus sick, were a sore re-

proach to us and a manifest sign of little wit on our part, if the folk, who have seen us first receive him and after let tend and medicine him with such solicitude, should now see him suddenly put out of our house, sick unto death as he is, without it being possible for him to have done aught that should displease us. On the other hand, he hath been so wicked a man that he will never consent to confess or take any sacrament of the church; and he dying without confession, no church will receive his body; nay, he will be cast into a ditch, like a dog. Again, even if he do confess, his sins are so many and so horrible that the like will come of it, for that there is nor priest nor friar who can or will absolve him thereof; wherefore, being unshriven, he will still be cast into the ditches. Should it happen thus, the people of the city, as well on account of our trade, which appeareth to them most iniquitous and of which they missay all day, as of their itch to plunder us, seeing this, will rise up in riot and cry out, "These Lombard dogs, whom the church refuseth to receive, are to be suffered here no longer;"—and they will run to our houses and despoil us not only of our good, but may be of our lives, to boot; wherefore in any case it will go ill with us, if yonder fellow die.'

Master Ciappelletto, who as we have said lay near the place where the two brothers were in discourse, being quick of hearing, as is most times the case with the sick, heard what they said of him and calling them to him, bespoke them thus: 'I will not have you anywise misdoubt of me nor fear to take any hurt by me. I have heard what you say of me and am well assured that it would happen even as you say, should matters pass as you expect; but it shall go otherwise. I have in my lifetime done God the Lord so many an affront that it will make neither more nor less, an I do Him yet another at the point of death; wherefore do you make shift to bring me the holiest and worthiest friar you may avail to have, if any such there be, and leave the rest to me, for that I will assuredly order your affairs

and mine own on such wise that all shall go well and you shall have good cause to be satisfied.'

The two brothers, albeit they conceived no great hope of this, nevertheless betook themselves to a brotherhood of monks and demanded some holy and learned man to hear the confession of a Lombard who lay sick in their house. There was given them a venerable brother of holy and good life and a past master in Holy Writ, a very reverend man, for whom all the townsfolk had a very great and special regard, and they carried him to their house; where, coming to the chamber where Master Ciappelletto lay and seating himself by his side, he began first tenderly to comfort him and after asked him how long it was since he had confessed last; whereto Master Ciappelletto, who had never confessed in his life, answered, 'Father, it had been my usance to confess every week once at the least and often more; it is true that, since I fell sick, to wit, these eight days past, I have not confessed, such is the annoy that my sickness hath given me.' Quoth the friar. 'My son, thou hast done well and so must thou do henceforward. I see, since thou confessest so often, that I shall be at little pains either of hearing or questioning.' 'Sir,' answered Master Ciappelletto, 'say not so; I have never confessed so much nor so often, but I would still fain make a general confession of all my sins that I could call to mind from the day of my birth to that of my confession; wherefore I pray you, good my father, question me as punctually of everything, nay, everything, as if I had never confessed; and consider me not because I am sick, for that I had far liefer displease this my flesh than, in consulting its ease, do aught that might be the perdition of my soul, which my Saviour redeemed with His precious blood.'

These words much pleased the holy man and seemed to him to argue a well-disposed mind; wherefore, after he had much commended Master Ciappelletto for that his usance, he asked him if he had ever sinned by way of lust with any woman.

'Father,' replied Master Ciappelletto, sighing, 'on this point I am ashamed to tell you the truth, fearing to sin by way of vainglory.' Quoth the friar, 'Speak in all security, for never did one sin by telling the truth, whether in confession or otherwise.' 'Then,' said Master Ciappelletto, 'since you certify me of this, I will tell you; I am yet a virgin, even as I came forth of my mother's body.' 'O blessed be thou of God!' cried the monk. 'How well hast thou done! And doing thus, thou hast the more deserved, inasmuch as, an thou wouldst, thou hadst more leisure to do the contrary than we and whatsoever others are limited by any rule.'

After this he asked him if he had ever offended against God in the sin of gluttony; whereto Master Ciappelletto answered, sighing 'Ay had he, and that many a time; for that, albeit, over and above the Lenten fasts that are yearly observed of the devout, he had been wont to fast on bread and water three days at the least in every week,—he had oftentimes (and especially whenas he had endured any fatigue, either praying or going a-pilgrimage) drunken the water with as much appetite and as keen a relish as great drinkers do wine. And many a time he had longed to have such homely salads of potherbs as women make when they go into the country; and whiles eating had given him more pleasure than him seemed it should do to one who fasteth for devotion, as did he. 'My son,' said the friar, 'these sins are natural and very slight and I would not therefore have thee burden thy conscience withal more than behoveth. It happened to every man, how devout soever he be, that, after long fasting, meat seemeth good to him, and after travail, drink.'

'Alack, father mine,' rejoined Ciappelletto, 'tell me not this to comfort me; you must know I know that things done for the service of God should be done sincerely and with an ungrudging mind; and whoso doth otherwise sinneth.' Quoth the friar, exceeding well pleased, 'I am content that thou shouldst thus ap-

prehend it and thy pure and good conscience therein pleaseth me exceedingly. But, tell me, hast thou sinned by way of avarice, desiring more than befitted or withholding that which it behoved thee not to withhold?' 'Father mine,' replied Ciappelletto, 'I would not have you look to my being in the house of these usurers; I have naught to do here; nay, I came hither to admonish and chasten them and turn them from this their abominable way of gain; and methinketh I should have made shift to do so, had not God thus visited me. But you must know that I was left a rich man by my father, of whose good, when he was dead, I bestowed the most part in alms, and after, to sustain my life and that I might be able to succor Christ's poor, I have done my little traffickings, and in these I have desired to gain; but still with God's poor have I shared that which I gained, converting my own half to my occasions and giving them the other, and in this so well hath my Creator prospered me that my affairs have still gone from good to better.'

'Well hast thou done,' said the friar; 'but hast thou often been angered?' 'Oh,' cried Master Ciappelletto, 'that I must tell you I have very often been! And who could keep himself therefrom, seeing men do unseemingly things all day long, keeping not the commandments of God neither fearing His judgments? Many times a day I had liefer been dead than alive, seeing young men follow after vanities and hearing them curse and forswear themselves, haunting the taverns, visiting not the churches and ensuing rather the ways of the world than that of God.' 'My son,' said the friar, 'this is a righteous anger, nor for my part might I enjoin thee any penance therefor. But hath anger at any time availed to move thee to do any manslaughter or to bespeak any one unseemly or do any other unright?' 'Alack, sir,' answered the sick man, 'you, who seem to me a man of God, how can you say such words? Had I ever had the least thought of doing any one of the things whereof

you speak, think you I believe that God would so long have forborne me? These be the doings of outlaws and men of nought, whereof I never saw but I said still, "Go, may God amend thee!" '

Then said the friar, 'Now tell me, my son (blessed be thou of God!), hast thou never borne false witness against any or missaid of another or taken others' good, without leave of him to whom it pertained?' 'Ay, indeed, sir,' replied Master Ciappelletto; 'I have missaid of others; for that I had a neighbor aforetime, who, with the greatest unright in the world, did nought but beat his wife, insomuch that I once spoke ill of him to her kinsfolk, so great was the compassion that overcame me for the poor woman, whom he used as God alone can tell, whenassoever he had drunken overmuch.' Quoth the friar, 'Thou tellest me thou hast been a merchant. Hast thou never cheated any one, as merchants do whiles?' 'I' faith, yes, sir,' answered Master Ciappelletto; 'but I know not whom, except it were a certain man, who once brought me monies which he owed me for cloth I had sold him and which I threw into a chest, without counting. A good month after, I found that they were four farthings more than they should have been wherefore, not seeing him again and having kept them by me a full year, that I might restore them to him, I gave them away in alms.' Quoth friar, 'This was a small matter, and thou didst well to deal with it as thou didst.'

Then he questioned him of many other things, all of which he answered after the same fashion, and the holy father offering to proceed to absolution, Master Ciappelletto said, 'Sir, I have yet sundry sins that I have not told you.' The friar asked him what they were, and he answered, 'I mind me that one Saturday, afternone, I caused my servant sweep out the house and had not that reverence for the Lord's holy day which it behoved me have.' 'Oh,' said the friar, 'that is a light matter, my son.' 'Nay,' rejoined Master Ciappelletto, 'call it not a light matter,

for that the Lord's Day is greatly to be honored, seeing that on such a day our Lord rose from the dead.' Then said the friar, 'Well, hast thou done aught else?' 'Ay, sir,' answered Master Ciappelletto; 'once, unthinking what I did, I spat in the church of God.' Thereupon the friar fell a-smiling and said, 'My son, that is no thing to be reckoned of; we who are of the clergy, we spit there all day long.' 'And you do very ill,' rejoined Master Ciappelletto; 'for that there is nought which it so straitly behoveth to keep clean as the holy temple wherein is rendered sacrifice to God.'

Brief, he told him great plenty of such like things and presently fell a-sighing and after weeping sore, as he knew full well to do, whenas as he would. Quoth the holy friar, 'What aileth thee, my son?' 'Alas, sir,' replied Master Ciappelletto, 'I have one sin left, whereof I never yet confessed me, such shame have I to tell it; and every time I call it to mind, I weep, even as you see, and meseemeth very certain that God will never pardon it me.' 'Go to, son,' rejoined the friar; 'what is this thou sayest? If all the sins that were ever wrought or are yet to be wrought of all mankind, what while the world endureth, were all in one man and he repented him thereof and were contrite therefor, as I see thee, such is the mercy and loving-kindness of God that, upon confession He would freely pardon them to him. Wherefore do thou tell it in all assurance.' Quoth Master Ciappelletto, still weeping sore, 'Alack, father mine, mine is too great a sin, and I can scarce believe that it will ever be forgiven me of God, except your prayers strive for me.' Then said the friar, 'Tell it me in all assurance, for I promise thee to pray God for thee.'

Master Ciappelletto, however, still wept and said nought; but, after he had thus held the friar a great while in suspense, he heaved a deep sigh and said, 'Father mine, since you promise me to pray God for me, I will e'en tell it you. Know, then, that, when I was little, I once cursed my mother.' So saying, he fell

again to weeping sore. 'O my son,' quoth the friar, 'seemeth this to thee so heinous a sin? Why, men blaspheme God all day long and He freely pardoneth whoso repenteth him of having blasphemed Him; and deemest thou not He will pardon thee this? Weep not, but comfort thyself; for, certes, wert thou one of those who set Him on the cross, He would pardon thee, in favor of such contrition as I see in thee.' 'Alack, father mine, what say you?' replied Ciappelletto. 'My kind mother, who bore me nine months in her body day and night, and carried me on her neck an hundred times and more, I did passing ill to curse her and it was an exceeding great sin; and except you pray God for me, it will not be forgiven me.'

The friar, then, seeing that Master Ciappelletto had no more to say, gave him absolution and bestowed on him his benison, holding him a very holy man and devoutly believing all that he had told him to be true. And who would not have believed it, hearing a man at the point of death speak thus? Then, after all this, he said to him, 'Master Ciappelletto, with God's help you will speedily be whole; but, should it come to pass that God call your blessed and well-disposed soul to himself, would it please you that your body be buried in our convent?' 'Ay, would it, sir,' replied Master Ciappelletto. 'Nay, I would fain not be buried otherwhere, since you have promised to pray God for me; more by token that I have ever had a special regard for your order. Wherefore I pray you that, whenas you return to your lodging, you cause bring me that most veritable body of Christ, which you consecrate a-mornings upon the altar, for that, with your leave, I purpose (all unworthy as I am) to take it and after, holy and extreme unction, to the intent that if I have lived as a sinner, I may at the least die like a Christian.' The good friar replied that it pleased him much and that he said well and promised to see it presently brought him; and so was it done.

Meanwhile, the two brothers misdoubting them sore lest

Master Ciappelletto should play them false, had posted themselves behind a wainscot, that divided the chambers where he lay from another, and listening, easily heard and apprehended that which he said to the friar and had whiles so great a mind to laugh, hearing the things which he confessed to having done, that they were like to burst and said, one to another, 'What manner of man is this, whom neither old age nor sickness nor fear of death, whereunto he seeth himself near, nor yet of God, before whose judgment-seat he looketh to be ere long, have availed to turn from his wickedness nor hinder him from choosing to die as he hath lived? However, seeing that he had so spoken that he should be admitted to burial in a church, they recked nought of the rest.

Master Ciappelletto presently took the sacrament and growing rapidly worse, received extreme unction, and a little after evensong of the day he had made his fine confession, he died; whereupon the two brothers, having, of his proper monies, taken order for his honorable burial, sent to the convent to acquaint the friars therewith, bidding them come thither that night to hold vigil, according to usance, and fetch away the body in the morning, and meanwhile made ready all that was needful thereunto.

The holy friar, who had shriven him, hearing that he had departed this life, betook himself to the prior of the convent and letting ring to chapter, gave out to the brethren therein assembled that Master Ciappelletto had been a holy man, according to that which he had gathered from his confession, and persuaded them to receive his body with the utmost reverence and devotion, in the hope that God should show forth many miracles through him. To this the prior and brethren credulously consented and that same evening, coming all whereas Master Ciappelletto lay dead, they held high and solemn vigil over him and on the morrow, clad all in albs and copes, book in hand and crosses before them, they went, chanting the while, for his body

and brought it with the utmost pomp and solemnity to their church, followed by well nigh all the people of the city, men and women.

As soon as they had set the body down in the church, the holy friar, who had confessed him, mounted the pulpit and fell a-preaching marvellous things of the dead man and of his life, his fasts, his virginity, his simplicity and innocence and sanctity, recounting, amongst other things, that which he had confessed to him as his greatest sin and how he had hardly availed to persuade him that God would forgive it him; thence passing on to reprove the folk who hearkened, 'And you, accursed that you are,' quoth he, 'for every waif of straw that stirreth between your feet, you blaspheme God and the Virgin and all the host of heaven.' Moreover, he told them many other things of his loyalty and purity of heart; brief, with his speech, whereto entire faith was yielded of the people of the city, he so established the dead man in the reverent consideration of all who were present that, no sooner was the service at an end, than they all with the utmost eagerness flocked to kiss his hands and feet and the clothes were torn off his back, he holding himself blessed who might avail to have never so little thereof; and needs must they leave him thus all that day, so he might be seen and visited of all.

The following night he was honorably buried in a marble tomb in one of the chapels of the church and on the morrow the folk began incontinent to come and burn candles and offer up prayers and make vows to him and hang images of wax at his shrine, according to the promise made. Nay, on such wise waxed the fame of his sanctity and men's devotion to him that there was scarce any who, being in adversity, would vow himself to another saint than him; and they styled and yet style him Saint Ciappelletto and avouch that God through him hath wrought many miracles and yet worketh them every day for whoso devoutly commendeth himself unto him.

Thus, then, lived and died Master Cepperello da Prato and became a saint, as you have heard; nor would I deny it to be possible that he is beatified in God's presence, for that, albeit his life was wicked and perverse, he may at his last extremity have shown such contrition that peradventure God had mercy on him and received him into His kingdom; but, for that this is hidden from us, I reason according to that which is apparent and say that he should rather be in the hands of the devil in perdition than in Paradise. And if so it be, we may know from this how great is God's loving-kindness towards us, which, having regard not to our error, but to the purity of our faith, whenas we thus make an enemy (deeming him a friend) of His our intermediary, giveth ear unto us, even as if we had recourse unto one truly holy, as intercessor for His favor. Wherefore, to the end that by His grace we may be preserved safe and sound in this present adversity and in this so joyous company, let us, magnifying His name, in which we have begun our diversion, and holding Him in reverence, commend ourselves to Him in our necessities, well assured of being heard." And with this he was silent.

The Story of the Three Rings

NEIFILE having made an end of her story, which was commended of all, Filomena, by the queen's good pleasure, proceeded to speak thus: "The story told by Neifile bringeth to my mind a parlous case that once betided a Jew; and for that, it having already been excellent well spoken both of God and of the verity of our faith, it should not henceforth be forbidden us to descend to the doings of mankind and the events that have befallen them, I will now proceed to relate to you the case aforesaid, which having heard, you will peradventure become more wary in answering the questions that may be put to you. You must know, lovesome companions mine, that, like as folly oft-times draweth folk forth of happy estate and casteth them into the utmost misery, even so doth good sense extricate the wise man from the greatest perils and place him in assurance and tranquility. How true it is that folly bringeth many an one from fair estate into misery is seen by a multitude of examples, with the recounting wherof we have no present concern, considering that a thousand instances thereof do every day manifestly appear to us; but that good sense is a cause of solacement I will, as I promised, briefly show you by a little story.

Saladin,—whose valor was such that not only from a man of little account it made him Soldan of Babylon, but gained him many victories over kings Saracen and Christian,—having in divers wars and in the exercise of his extraordinary munificences expended his whole treasurer and having an urgent occasion for a good sum of money nor seeing whence he might

avail to have it as promptly as it behoved him, called to mind a rich Jew, by name Melchizedek, who lent at usance in Alexandria, and bethought himself that this latter had the wherewithal to oblige him, and he would; but he was so miserly that he would never have done it of his free-will and Saladin was loath to use force with him; wherefore, need constraining him, he set his every wit awork to find a means how the Jew might be brought to serve him in this and presently concluded to do him a violence colored by some show of reason.

Accordingly he sent for Melchizdek and receiving him familiarly, seated him by himself, then said to him: 'Honest man, I have understood from divers persons that thou art a very learned man and deeply versed in matters of divinity; wherefore I would fain know of thee whether of the three Laws thou reputest the true, the Jewish, the Saracen or the Christian.' The Jew, who was in truth a man of learning and understanding, perceived but too well that Saladin looked to entrap him in words, so he might fasten a quarrel on him, and bethought himself that he could not praise any of the three more than the others without giving him the occasion he sought. Accordingly, sharpening his wits, as became one who felt himself in need of an answer by which he might not be taken at a vantage, there speedily occured to him that which it behoved him reply and he said, 'My lord, the question that you propound to me is a nice one and to acquaint you with that which I think of the matter, it behoveth me tell you a little story, which you shall hear.

An I mistake not, I mind me to have many a time heard tell that there was once a great man and a rich, who among other very precious jewels in his treasury, had a very goodly and costly ring, whereunto being minded, for its worth and beauty, to do honor and wishing to leave it in perpetuity to his descendants, he declared that whichsoever of his sons should, at his death, be found in possession thereof, by his

bequest unto him, should be recognized as his heir and be held of all the others in honor and reverence as chief and head. He to whom the ring was left by him held a like course with his own descendants and did even as his father had done. In brief, the ring passed from hand to hand, through many generations, and came at last into the possession of a man who had three goodly and virtuous sons all very obedient to their father, wherefor he loved them all three alike. The young men, knowing the usance of the ring, each for himself desiring to be the most honored among his folk, as best he might, besought his father, who was now an old man, to leave him the ring, whenas he came to die. The worthy man, who loved them all alike and knew not himself how to choose to which he had liefer leave the ring, besought himself, having promised it to each, to seek to satisfy all three and privily let make by a good craftsman other two rings which were so like unto the first that he himself scarce knew which was the true. When he came to die, he secretly gave each one of his sons his ring, wherefore each of them, seeking after their father's death, to occupy the inheritance and the honor and denying it to the others, produced his ring, in witness of his right, and the three rings being found so like unto one another that the true might not be known, the question which was the father's very heir abode pending and yet pendeth. And so say I to you, my lord, of the three Laws to the three peoples given of God the Father, whereof you question me; each people deemeth itself to have His inheritance. His true Law and His commandments; but of which in very deed hath them, even as of the rings, the question yet pendeth."

Saladin perceived that the Jew had excellently well contrived to escape the snare which he had spread before his feet; wherefore he concluded to discover to him his need and see if he were willing to serve him; and so accordingly he did, confessing to him that which he had it in mind to do, had he not

answered him on such discreet wise. The Jew freely furnished him with all that he required, and the Soldan after satisfied him in full; moreover, he gave him very great gifts and still had him to friend and maintained him about his own person in high and honorable estate."

The Tragedy of Illicit Love

"YOU must know, then, that, according to that which the Provençals relate, there were aforetime in Provence two noble knights, each of whom had castles and vassals under him, called the one Sir Guillaume de Roussillon and the other Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing; and for that they were both men of great prowess in arms, they loved each other with an exceeding love and were wont to go still together and clad in the same colors to every tournament or jousting or other act of arms. Although they abode each in his own castle and were distant, one from other, a good half score miles, yet it came to pass that Sir Guillame de Roussillon having a very fair and lovesome lady to wife, Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing, notwithstanding the friendship and fellowship that was between them, became beyond measure enamored of her and so wrought, now with one means and now with another, that the lady became aware of his passion and knowing him for a very valiant knight, it pleased her and she began to return his love, insomuch that she desired and tendered nothing more than him nor awaited otherwhat than to be solicited of him; the which was not long in coming to pass and they foregathered once and again.

Loving each other amain and conversing together less discreetly than behoved, it befell that the husband became aware of their familiarity and was mightily incensed thereat, insomuch that the great love he bore to Guardestaing was turned into mortal hatred; but this he knew better to keep hidden than the two lovers had known to conceal their love and was fully

resolved in himself to kill him. Roussillon being in this mind, it befell that the great tourneying was proclaimed in France, the which he forthright signified to Guardestaing and sent to bid him come to him, an it pleased him, so they might take counsel together if and how they should go thither; whereto the other very joyously answered that he would without fail come to sup with him on the ensuing day. Roussillon, hearing this, thought the time come whenas he might avail to kill him and accordingly on the morrow he armed himself and mounting to horse with a servant of his, lay at ambush, maybe a mile from his castle, in a wood whereas Guardestaing must pass.

There after he had awaited him a good while, he saw him come, unarmed and followed by two servants in like case, as one who apprehended nothing from him; and when he saw him come whereas he would have him, he rushed out upon him, lance in hand, full of rage and malice, crying, 'Traitor, thou art dead!' And to say thus and to plunge the lance into his breast were one and the same thing. Guardestaing, without being able to make any defense or even to say a word, fell from his horse, transfixed of the lance, and a little after died; whilst his servants, without waiting to learn who had done this, turned their horses' heads and fled, as quickliest they might, towards their lord's castle. Roussillon dismounted and opening the dead man's breast with a knife, with his own hands tore out his heart, which he let wrap in the pennon of a lance and gave to one of his men to carry. Then, commanding that none should dare make words of the matter, he remounted, it being now night, and returned to his castle.

The lady, who had heard that Guardestaing was to be there that evening to supper and looked for him with the utmost impatience, seeing him not come, marvelled sore and said to her husband, 'How is it, sir, that Guardestaing is not come?' 'Wife,' answered he, 'I have had [word] from him that he cannot be here till to-morrow;' whereat the lady abode somewhat

troubled. Roussillon then dismounted and calling the cook, said to him, 'Take this wild boar's heart and look thou make a dainty dish thereof, the best and most delectable to eat that thou knowest, and when I am at table, send it to me in a silver porringer.' The cook accordingly took the heart and putting all his art thereto and all his diligence, minced it and seasoning it with store of rich spices, made of it a very dainty ragout.

When it was time, Sir Guillaume sat down to table with his wife and the viands came; but he ate little, being hindered in thought for the ill deed he had committed. Presently the cook sent him the ragout, which he caused set before the lady, feigning himself disordered that evening and commending the dish to her amain. The lady, who was nowise squeamish, tasted thereof and finding it good, ate it all; which when the knight saw, he said to her, 'Wife, how deem you of this dish?' 'In good sooth, my lord,' answered she, 'it liketh me exceedingly.' Whereupon, 'So God be mine aid,' quoth Roussillon; I do indeed believe it you, nor do I marvel if that please you, dead, which, alive, pleased you more than aught else.' The lady, hearing this, hesitated awhile, then said, 'How? What have you made me eat?' 'This that you have eaten,' answered the knight, 'was in very truth the heart of Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing, whom you, disloyal wife as you are, so loved; and know for certain that it is his very heart, for that I tore it from his breast with these hands a little before my return.'

It needeth not to ask if the lady were woebegone, hearing this of him whom she loved more than aught else; and after awhile she said, 'You have done the deed of a disloyal and base knight, as you are; for, if I unenforced of him, made him lord of my love and therein offended against you, not he, but I should have borne the penalty thereof. But God forfend that ever other victual should follow upon such noble meat as the heart of so valiant and so courteous a gentleman as was Sir

Guillaume de Guardestaing!' Then, rising to her feet, without any manner of hesitation, she let herself fall backward through a window which was behind her and which was exceeding high above the ground: whereof as she fell, she was not only killed, but well nigh broken in pieces.

Sir Guillaume, seeing this, was sore dismayed and himseemed he had done ill; whereof being adread of the country people and of the Count of Provence, he let saddle his horses and made off. On the morrow it was known all over the country how the thing had passed; whereupon the two bodies were, with the utmost grief and lamentation, taken up by Guardestaing's people and those of the lady and laid in one same sepulchre in the chapel of the latter's own castle; and thereover were verses written, signifying who these were that were buried therewithin and the manner and occasion of their death.''

Iphigenia, Mistress of Cimon

"MANY stories, delightsome ladies, apt to give beginning to so glad a day as this will be, offer themselves unto me to be related; whereof one is the most pleasing to my mind, for that thereby, beside the happy issue which is to mark this day's discourses, you may understand how holy, how puissant and how full of all good is the power of Love, which many, unknowing what they say, condemn and vilify with great unright; and this, an I err not, must needs be exceeding pleasing to you, for that I believe you all to be in love.

There was, then, in the island of Cyprus (as we have read aforetime in the ancient histories of the Cypriots), a very noble gentleman, by name Aristippus, who was rich beyond any other of the country in all temporal things and might have held himself the happiest man alive, had not fortune made him woeful in only one thing, to wit, that amongst his other children he had a son who overpassed all the other youths of his age in stature and goodliness of body, but was a hopeless dullard and well nigh an idiot. His true name was Galesus, but for that neither by toil of teacher nor blandishment nor beating of his father nor study nor endeavor of whatsoever other had it been found possible to put into his head any inkling of letters of good breeding and that he had a rough voice and an uncouth and manners more befitting a beast than a man, he was of well nigh all by way of mockery called Cimon, which in their tongue signified as much as brute beast in ours. His father brooked his wasted life with the most grievous concern and having presently given over all hope of him, he bade him begone to his

country house and there abide with his husbandmen, so he might not still have before him the cause of his chagrin; the which was very agreeable to Cimon, for that the manners and usages of clowns and churls were much more to his liking than those of the townsfolk.

Cimon, then, betaking himself to the country and there employing himself in the things that pertained thereto, it chanced one day, awhile after none, as he passed from one farm to another, with his staff on his shoulder, that he entered a very fair coppice which was in those parts and which was then all in leaf, for that it was the month of May. Passing therethrough, he happened (even as his fortune guided him thither) upon a little mead compassed about with very high trees, in one corner whereof was a very clear and cool spring, beside which he saw a very fair damsel asleep upon the green grass, with so thin a garment upon her body that it hid well nigh nothing of her snowy flesh. She was covered only from the waist down with a very white and light coverlet; and at her feet slept on like wise two women and a man, her servants. When Cimon espied the young lady, he halted and leaning upon his staff, fell, without saying a word, to gazing most intently upon her with the utmost admiration, no otherwise than as he had never yet seen a woman's form, whilst in his rude breast, wherein for a thousand lessonings no least impression of civil pleasance had availed to penetrate, he felt a thought awaken which intimated to his gross and material spirit that this maiden was the fairest thing that had been ever seen of any living soul. Thence he proceeded to consider her various parts,—commending her hair, which he accounted of gold, her brow, her nose, her mouth, her throat and her arms, and above all her breast, as yet but little upraised,—and grown of a sudden from a churl a judge of beauty, he ardently desired in himself to see the eyes, which, weighed down with deep sleep, she kept closed. To this end, he had it several times in mind to awaken her; but, for

that she seemed to him beyond measure fairer than the other women aforetime seen of him, he misdoubted him she must be some goddess. Now he had wit enough to account things divine worthy of more reverence than those mundane; wherefore he forbore, waiting for her to awake of herself; and albeit the delay seemed overlong to him, yet, taken as he was with an unwonted pleasure, he knew not how to tear himself away.

It befell, then, that, after a long while, the damsel, whose name was Iphigenia, came to herself, before any of her people, and opening her eyes, saw Cimon (who, what for his fashion and uncouthness and his father's wealth and noblity, was known in a manner to every one in the country) standing before her, leant on his staff, marvelled exceedingly and said, 'Cimon, what goest thou seeking in this wood at this hour?' He made her no answer, but seeing her eyes open, began to look steadfastly upon them, himseeming there proceeded thence a sweetness which fulfilled him with a pleasure such as he had never before felt. The young lady, seeing this, began to misdoubt her lest his so fixed looking upon her should move his rusticity to somewhat that might turn her to shame; wherefore, calling her women, she rose up, saying, 'Cimon, abide with God.' To which he replied, 'I will begone with thee;' and albeit the young lady, who was still in fear of him, would have declined his company, she could not win to rid herself of him till he had accompanied her to her own house.

Thence he repaired to his father's house (in the city), and declared to him that he would on no wise consent to return to the country; the which was irksome enough to Aristippus and his kinsfolk; nevertheless they let him be, awaiting to see what might be the cause of his change of mind. Love's arrow having, then, through Iphigenia's beauty, penetrated into Cimon's heart, whereinto no teaching had ever availed to win an entrance, in a very brief time, proceeding from one idea to another, he made his father marvel and all his kinsfolk and

every other that knew him. In the first place he besought his father that he would cause him to go bedecked with clothes and every other thing, even as his brothers, the which Aristippus right gladly did. Then, consorting with young men of condition and learning the fashions and carriage that behoved unto gentlemen and especially unto lovers, he first, to the utmost wonderment of every one, in a very brief space of time, not only learned the first [elements of] letters, but became very eminent among the students of philosophy, and after (the love which he bore Iphigenia being the cause of all this) he not only reduced his rude and rustical manner of speech to seemliness and civility, but became a past master of song and sound and exceeding expert and doughty in riding and martial exercises, both by land and by sea. In short, not to go recounting every particular of his merits, the fourth year was not accomplished from the day of his first falling in love, ere he was grown the sprightliest and most accomplished gentleman of all the young men in the island of Cyprus, ay, and the best endowed with every particular excellence. What, then, charming ladies, shall we say of Cimon? Certes, none other thing than that lofty virtues implanted by heaven in his generous soul had been bounden with exceeding strong bonds of jealous fortune and shut in some straitest corner of his heart, all which bonds Love, as a mightier than fortune, broke and burst in sunder and in its quality of awakener and quickener of drowsed and sluggish wits, urged forth into the broad daylight the virtues aforesaid, which had till then been overdarkened with a barbarous obscurity, thus manifestly discovering from how mean a room it can avail to uplift those souls that are subject unto it and to what an eminence it can conduct them with its beams.

Although Cimon, loving Iphigenia as he did, might exceed in certain things, as young men in love very often do, nevertheless Aristippus, considering that Love had turned him from

a dunce into a man, not only patiently bore with the extravagances into which it might whiles lead him, but encouraged him to ensue its every pleasure. But Cimon (who refused to be called Galesus, remembering that Iphigenia had called him by the former name), seeking to put an honorable term to his desire, once and again caused essay Cipseus, Iphigenia's father, so he should give him his daughter to wife; but Cipseus still answered that he had promised her to Pasimondas, a young nobleman of Rhodes, to whom he had no mind to fail of his word. The time coming for the covenanted nuptials of Iphigenia and the bridegroom having sent for her, Cimon said in himself, 'Now, O Iphigenia, is the time to prove how much thou art beloved of me. By thee am I become a man and so I may but have thee, I doubt not to become more glorious than any god; and for certain I will have thee or die.'

Accordingly, having secretly recruited certain young noblemen who were his friends and let privily equip a ship with everything apt for naval battle, he put out to sea and awaited the vessel wherein Iphigenia was to be transported to her husband in Rhodes. The bride, after much honor done of her father to the bridegroom's friends, took ship with the latter, who turned their prow towards Rhodes and departed. On the following day, Cimon, who slept not, came out upon them with his ship and cried out, in a loud voice, from the prow, to those who were on board Iphigenia's vessel, saying, 'Stay, strike your sails or look to be beaten and sunken in the sea.' Cimon's adversaries had gotten up their arms on deck and made ready to defend themselves; whereupon he, after speaking the words aforesaid, took a grappling iron and casting it upon the poop of the Rhodians, who were making off at the top of their speed, made it fast by main force to the prow of his own ship. Then, bold as a lion, he leapt on board their ship, without waiting for any to follow him, as if he held them all for nought, and Love spurring him, he fell upon his enemies

with marvellous might, cutlass in hand, striking now this one and now that and hewing them down like sheep.

The Rhodians, seeing this, cast down their arms and all as with one voice confessed themselves prisoners; whereupon quoth Cimon to them. 'Young men, it was neither lust nor rapine nor hate that I had against you made me depart Cyprus to assail you, arms in hand, in mid sea. That which moved me thereunto was the desire of a thing which to have gotten is a very grave matter to me and to you a very light one to yield me in peace; it is, to wit, Iphigenia, who I love over all else and whom, availing not to have of her father on friendly and peaceable wise, Love hath constrained me to win from you as an enemy and by force of arms. Wherefore I mean to be to her that which your friend Pasimondas should have been. Give her to me then, and begone and God's grace go with you.'

The Rhodians, more by force constrained than of free-will, surrendered Iphigenia, weeping to Cimon, who seeing her in tears, said to her, 'Noble lady, be not disconsolate; I am thy Cimon, who by long love have far better deserved to have thee than Pasimondas by plighted faith.' Thereupon he caused carry her aboard his own ship and returning to his companions, let the Rhodians go, without touching aught else of theirs. Then, glad beyond any man alive to have gotten so dear a prey, after devoting some time to comforting the weeping lady, he took counsel with his comrades not to return to Cyprus at that present; wherefore, of one accord they turned the ship's head towards Crete, where well nigh every one, and especially Cimon, had kinsfolk, old and new, and friends in plenty and where they doubted not to be in safety with Iphigenia. But fortune the unstable, which had cheerfully enough vouchsafed unto Cimon the acquisition of the lady, suddenly changed the inexpressable joyance of the enamored youth into sad and bitter mourning; for it was not four full told hours since he had left the Rhodians when the night (which Cimon looked to

be more delightsome than any he had ever known) came on and with it a very troublous and tempestuous shift of weather, which filled all the sky with clouds and the sea with ravening winds, by reason whereof none could see what to do or whither to steer, nor could any even keep the deck to do any office.

How sore concerned was Cimon for this needeth not to ask; himseemed the gods had vouchsafed him his desire but to make death the more grievous to him, whereof, without that, he had before reckoned little. His comrades lamented on like wise, but Iphigenia bewailed herself over all, weeping sore and fearing every stroke of the waves; and in her chagrin she bitterly cursed Cimon's love and blamed his presumption, avouching that the tempest had arisen for none other thing but that the gods chose not that he, who would fain against their will have her to wife, should avail to enjoy his presumptuous desire, but, seeing her first die, should after himself perish miserably.

Amidst such lamentations and others yet more grievous, the wind waxing hourly fiercer and the seamen knowing not what to do, they came, without witting whither they went or availing to change their course near to the island of Rhodes, and unknowing that it was Rhodes, they used their every endeavor to get to land thereon, an it were possible, for the saving of their lives. In this fortune was favorable to them and brought them into a little bight of the sea, where the Rhodians whom Cimon had let go had a little before arrived with their ship; nor did they perceive that they had struck the island of Rhodes till the dawn broke and made the sky somewhat clearer, when they found themselves maybe a bowshot distant from the ship left of them the day before. At this Cimon was beyond measure chagrined and fearing lest that should betide them which did in very deed ensue, bade use every endeavor to issue thence and let fortune after carry them whither it should please her, for that they could be nowhere in worse case than there.

Accordingly, they made the utmost efforts to put to sea, but in vain; for the wind blew so mightily against them that not only could they not avail to issue from the little harbor, but, whether they would or no, it drove them ashore.

No sooner were they come thither than they were recognized by the Rhodian sailors, who had landed from their ship, and one of them ran nimbly to a village hard by, whither the young Rhodian gentlemen had betaken themselves, and told the latter that, as luck would have it, Cimon and Iphigenia were come thither aboard their ship, driven like themselves, by stress of weather. They hearing this, were greatly rejoiced and repairing in all haste to the sea-shore, with a number of the villagers, took Cimon, together with Iphigenia and all his company, who had now landed and taken counsel together to flee into some neighboring wood, and carried them to the village. The news coming to Pasimondas, he made his complaint to the senate of the island and according as he had ordered it with them, Lysimachus, in whom the chief magistracy of the Rhodians was for that year vested, coming thither from the city with a great company of men-at-arms, haled Cimon and all his men to prison. On such wise did the wretched and lovelorn Cimon lose his Iphigenia, scantwhile before won of him, without having taken of her more than a kiss or two; whilst she herself was received by many noble ladies of Rhodes and comforted as well for the chagrin had of her seizure as for the fatigue suffered by reason of the troubled sea; and with them she abode against the day appointed for her nuptials.

As for Cimon and his companions, their lives were granted them, in consideration of the liberty given by them to the young Rhodians the day before,—albeit Pasimondas used his utmost endeavor to procure them to be put to death,—and they were condemned to perpetual prison, wherein, as may well be believed, they abode woebegone and without hope of any relief. However, whilst Pasimondas, as most he might, hastened

the preparations for his coming nuptials, fortune as if repenting her of the sudden injury done to Cimon, brought about a new circumstance for his deliverance, the which was on this wise. Pasimondas had a brother called Ormisdas, less in years, but not in merit, than himself, who had been long in treaty for the hand of a fair and noble damsel of the city, by name Cassandra, whom Lysimachus ardently loved, and the match had sundry times been broken off by divers untoward accidents. Now Pasimondas, being about to celebrate his own nuptials with the utmost splendor, bethought himself that it were excellently well done if he could procure Ormisdas likewise to take wife on the same occasion, not to resort afresh to expense and festival making. Accordingly, he took up again the parleys with Cassandra's parents and brought them to a successful issue, wherefore he and his brother agreed, in concert with them, that Ormisdas should take Cassandra to wife on the same day whenas himself took Iphigenia.

Lysimachus hearing this, it was beyond measure displeasing to him, for that he saw himself bereaved of the hope which he cherished, that, an Ormisdas took her not, he should certainly have her. However, like a wise man, he kept his chagrin hidden and fell to considering on what wise he might avail to hinder this having effect, but could see no way possible save the carrying her off. This seemed easy to him to compass for the office which he held, but he accounted the deed far more dishonorable than if he had not held the office in question. Ultimately, however, after long deliberation, honor gave place to love and he determined, come what might of it, to carry off Cassandra. Then, bethinking himself of the company he must have and the course he must hold to do this, he remembered him of Cimon, whom he had in prison with his comrades, and concluded that he might have no better or trustier companion than Cimon, in this affair.

Accordingly, that same night he had him privily into his

chamber and proceeded to bespeak him on this wise: 'Cimon, like as the gods are very excellent and bountiful givers of things to men, even so are they most sagacious provers of their virtues, and those, whom they find resolute and constant under all circumstances, they hold deserving, as the most worthy, of the highest recompenses. They have been minded to have more certain proof of thy worth than could be shown by thee within the limits of thy father's house, whom I know to be abundantly endowed with riches; wherefore, first, with the poignant instigations of love they brought thee from a senseless animal to be a man, and after with foul fortune and at this present with prison dour, they would fain try if thy spirit change not from that which it was, whenas thou wast scantwhile glad of the gotten prize. If that be the same as it was erst, they never yet vouchsafed thee aught so gladsome as that which they are presently prepared to bestow on thee and which, so thou mayest recover thy wonted powers and resume thy whilom spirit, I purpose to discover to thee.

Pasimondas, rejoicing in thy misadventure and a diligent promoter of thy death, bestirreth himself as most he may to celebrate his nuptials with thine Iphigenia, so therein he may enjoy the prize which fortune first blithely conceded thee and after, growing troubled, took from thee of a sudden. How much this must grieve thee, an thou love as I believe, I know by myself, to whom Ormisdas his brother prepareth in one same day to do a like injury in the person of Cassandra, whom I love over all else. To escape so great an unright and annoy of fortune, I see no way left open of her to us, save the valor of our souls and the might of our right hands, wherein it behoveth us take our swords and make us a way to the carrying off of our two mistresses, thee for the second and me for the first time. If, then, it be dear to thee to have again—I will not say thy liberty, whereof methinketh thou reckest little without

thy lady, but—thy mistress, the gods have put her in thy hands, an thou be willing to second me in my emprize.'

All Cimon's lost spirit was requickened in him by these words and he replied, without overmuch consideration, 'Lysimachus, thou canst have no stouter or trustier comrade than myself in such an enterprise, an that be to ensue thereof for me which thou avouchest; wherefore do thou command me that which thou deemest should be done of me, and thou shalt find thyself wonder-puissantly seconded.' Then said Lysimachus, 'On the third day from this the new-married wives will for the first time enter their husband's houses, whereinto thou with thy companions armed and I with certain of my friends, in whom I put great trust, will make our way towards nightfall and snatching up our mistresses out of the middle of the guests, will carry them off to a ship, which I have caused secretly equip, slaying whosoever shall presume to offer opposition.' The device pleased Cimon and he abode quiet in prison until the appointed time.

The wedding-day being come, great and magnificent was the pomp of the festival and every part of the two brothers' house was full of mirth and merry-making; whereupon Lysimachus, having made ready everything needful, divided Cimon and his companions, together with his own friends, all armed under their clothes, into three parties and having first kindled them to his purpose with many words, secretly despatched one party to the harbor, so none might hinder their going aboard the ship, whenas need should be. Then, coming with the other twain, whenas it seemed to him time, to Pasimondas his house, he left one party of them at the door, so as none might shut them up therewithin or forbid them the issue, and with Cimon and the rest went up by the stairs. Coming to the saloon where the new-wedded brides were seated orderly at meat with many other ladies, they rushed in upon them and overthrowing the tables, took each mistress and putting them in the hands of

their comrades, bade straightway carry them to the ship that was in waiting. The brides fell a-weeping and shrieking, as did likewise other ladies and the servants, and the whole house was of a sudden full of clamor and lamentation.

Cimon and Lysimachus and their companions, drawing their swords, made for the stairs, without any opposition, all giving way to them, and as they descended, Pasimondas presented himself before them, with a great cudgel in his hand, being drawn thither by the outcry; but Cimon dealt him a swashing blow on the head and cleaving it sheer in sunder, laid him dead at his feet. The wretched Ormisdas, running to his brother's aid, was on like wise slain by one of Cimon's strokes, and divers others who sought to draw nigh them were in like manner wounded and beaten off by the companions of the latter and Lysimachus, who, leaving the house full of blood and clamor and weeping and woe, drew together and made their way to the ship with their prizes, unhindered of any. Here they embarked with their mistresses and all of their companions, the shore being now full of armed folk come to the rescue of the ladies, and thrusting the oars into the water, made off, rejoicing, about their business. Coming presently to Crete, they were there joyfully received by many, both friends and kinsfolk, and espousing their mistresses with great pomp, gave themselves up to the glad enjoyment of their purchase. Loud and long were the clamors and differences in Cyprus and in Rhodes by reason of their doings; but, ultimately, their friends and kinsfolk, interposing in one and the other place, found means so to adjust matters that, after some exile, Cimon joyfully returned to Cyprus with Iphigenia, whilst Lysimachus on like wise returned to Rhodes with Cassandra, and each lived long and happily with his mistress in his own country."

Calandrino's Story

"IN our city, then, which hath ever abounded in various fashions and strange folk, there was once, no great while since, a painter called Calandrino, a simple-witted man and of strange usances. He companied most of his time with other two painters, called the one Bruno and the other Buffalmacco, both very merry men, but otherwise well-advised and shrewd, who consorted with Calandrino for that they ofttimes had great diversion of his fashions and his simplicity. There was then also in Florence a young man of a mighty pleasant humor and marvellously adroit in all he had a mind to do, astute and plausible, who was called Maso del Saggio, and who, hearing certain traits of Calandrino's simplicity, determined to amuse himself at his expense by putting off some cheat on him or causing him believe some strange thing. He chanced one day to come upon him in the church of San Giovanni and seeing him intent upon the carved work and paintings of the pyx, which is upon the altar of the said church and which had then not long been placed there, he judged the place and time opportune for carrying his intent into execution. Accordingly, acquainting a friend of his with that which he purposed to do, they both drew near unto the place where Calandrino sat alone and feigning not to see him, fell a-discoursing together of the virtues of divers stones, whereof Meso spoke as authoritatively as if he had been a great and famous lapidary.

Calandrino gave ear to their talk and presently, seeing that it was no secret, he rose to his feet and joined himself to them, to the no small satisfaction of Maso, who, pursuing his discourse,

was asked by Calandrino where these wonder-working stones were to be found. Maso replied that the most of them were found in Berlinzone, a city of the Basques, in a country called Bengodi, where the vines are tied up with sausages and a goose is to be had for a farthing and a gosling into the bargain, and that there was a mountain all of grated Parmesan cheese, whereon abode folk who did nothing but make maccaroni and ravioli and cook them in capon-broth, after which they threw them down thence and whoso got most thereof had most; and that hard by ran a rivulet of vernage, the best ever was drunk, without a drop of water therein. 'Marry,' cried Calandrino, 'that were a fine country; but tell me, what is done with the capons that they boil for broth?' Quoth Maso, 'The Basques eat them all.' Then said Calandrino, 'Wast thou ever there?' 'Was I ever there, quotha!' replied Maso. 'If I have been there once, I have been there a thousand times.' 'And how many miles is it distant hence?' asked Calandrino; and Maso, 'How many? a million or mo; you might count them all night and not know.' 'Then,' said Calandrino, 'it must be farther off than the Abruzzi?' 'Ay, indeed,' answered Maso; 'it is a trifle farther.'

Calandrino, like a simpleton as he was, hearing Maso tell all this with an assured air and without laughing, gave such credence thereto as can be given to whatsoever verity is most manifest and so, holding it for truth, said, 'That is overfar for my money; though, were it nearer, I tell thee aright I would go thither with thee once upon a time, if but to see the maccaroni come tumbling headlong down and take my fill thereof. But tell me, God keep thee merry, is there none of those wonder-working stones to be found in these parts?' 'Ay is there,' answered Maso; 'there be two kinds of stones of very great virtue found here; the first are the grits of Settignano and Montisci, by virtue whereof, when they are wrought into mill-stones, flour is made; wherefore it is said in those parts that

grace cometh from God and millstones from Montisci; but there is such great plenty of these grits that they are as little prized with us as emeralds with the folk over yonder, where they have mountains of them bigger than Mount Morello, which shine in the middle of the night, I warrant thee. And thou must know that whoso should cause set fine and perfect millstones, before they are pierced in rings and carry them to the Soldan might have for them what he would. The other is what we lapidaries call Heliotrope, a stone of exceeding great virtue, for that whoso hath it about him is not seen of any other person whereas he is not, what while he holdeth it.' Quoth Calandrino, 'These be indeed great virtues; but where is this second stone found?' To which Maso replied that it was commonly found in the Mugnone. 'What bigness is this stone,' asked Calandrino 'and what is its color?' Quoth Maso, 'It is of various sizes, some more and some less; but all are well nigh black of color.'

Calandrino noted all this in himself and feigning to have otherwhat to do, took leave of Maso, inwardly determined to go seek the stone in question, but bethought himself not to do it without the knowledge of Bruno and Buffalmacco, whom he most particularly affected. Accordingly he addressed himself to seek for them, so they might, without delay and before any else, set about the search, and spent all the rest of the morning seeking them. At last, when it was past none, he remembered him that they were awork in the Ladies' Convent at Faenza and leaving all his other business, he betook himself thither well nigh at a run, notwithstanding the great heat. As soon as he saw them, he called them and bespoke them thus: 'Comrades, an you will hearken to me, we may become the richest men in all Florence, for that I have learned from a man worthy of belief that in the Mugnone is to be found a stone, which whoso carrieth about him is not seen of any; wherefore meseemeth we were best go thither in quest thereof without delay,

ere any forestall us. We shall certainly find it, for that I know it well, and when we have gotten it, what have we to do but put it in our poke and getting us to the moneychangers' tables, which you know stand still laden with groats and florins, take as much as we will thereof? None will see us, and so may we grow rich of a sudden, without having to smear walls all day long, snail-fashion.'

Bruno and Buffalmacco, hearing this, fell a-laughing in their sleeves and eyeing each other askance, made a show of exceeding wonderment and praised Calandrino's counsel, but Bruno asked how the stone in question was called. Calandrino, who was a clodpated fellow, had already forgotten the name, wherefore quoth he, 'What have we to do with the name, since we know the virtue of the stone? Meseemeth we were best go about the quest without more ado.' 'Well, then,' said Bruno, 'how is it fashioned?' 'It is of all fashions,' replied Calandrino; 'but all are well nigh black; wherefore meseemeth that what we have to do is to gather up all the black stones we see, till we happen upon the right. So let us lose no time, but get us gone.' Quoth Bruno, 'Wait awhile,' and turning to his comrade, said, 'Methinketh Calandrino saith well; but meseemeth this is no season for the search, for that the sun is high and shineth full upon the Mugnone, where it hath dried all the stones, so that certain of those that be there appear presently white, which of a morning, ere the sun have dried them, show black; more by token that, to-day being a working day, there be many folk, on one occasion or another, abroad along the banks, who, seeing us, may guess what we are about and maybe do likewise, whereby the stone may come to their hands and we shall have lost the trot for the amble. Meseemeth (an you be of the same way of thinking) that this is a business to be undertaken of a morning, whenas the black may be the better known from the white, and of a holiday, when there will be none there to see us.'

Buffalmacco commended Bruno's counsel and Calandrino fell in therewith: wherefore they agreed to go seek for the stone all three on the following Sunday morning, and Calandrino besought them over all else not to say a word of the matter to any one alive, for that it had been imparted to him in confidence, and after told them that which he had heard tell of the land of Bengodi, affirming with an oath that it was as he said. As soon as he had taken his leave, the two others agreed with each other what they should do in the matter and Calandrino impatiently awaited the Sunday morning, which being come, he arose at break of day and called his friends, with whom he sallied forth of the city by the San Gallo gate and descending into the bed of the Mugnone, began to go searching down stream for the stone. Calandrino, as the eagerest of the three, went on before, skipping nimbly hither and thither, and whenever he espied any black stone, he pounced upon it and picking it up, thrust it into his bosom. His comrades followed after him, picking up now one stone and now another; but Calandrino had not gone far before he had his bosom full of stones; wherefore, gathering up the skirts of his gown, which was not cut Flanders fashion, he tucked them well into his surcingle all around and made an ample lap thereof. However, it was no great while ere he had filled it and making a lap on like wise of his mantle, soon filled this also with stones. Presently, the two others seeing that he had gotten his load and that dinner-time drew nigh, quoth Bruno and Buffalmacco, in accordance with the plan concerted between them, 'Where is Calandrino?' Buffalmacco, who saw him hard by, turned about and looking now here and now there, answered, 'I know not; but he was before us but now.' 'But now, quotha!' cried Bruno. 'I warrant you he is presently at home at dinner and hath left us play the fool here, seeking black stones down the Mugnone.' 'Egad,' rejoined Buffalmacco, 'he hath done well to make mock of us and leave us here, since we were fools enough to credit him. Marry, who but we had been

simple enough to believe that a stone of such virtue was to be found in the Mugnone?'

Calandrino, hearing this, concluded that the heliothrope had fallen into his hands and that by virtue thereof they saw him not, albeit he was present with them, and rejoiced beyond measure at such a piece of good luck, answered them not a word, but determined to return; wherefore, turning back, he set off homeward. Buffalmacco, seeing this, said to Bruno, 'What shall we do? Why do we not get us gone?' Whereto Bruno answered, 'Let us begone; but I vow to God that Calandrino shall never again serve me thus, and were I presently near him as I have been all the morning, I would give him such a clout on the shins with this stone that he should have cause to remember this trick for maybe a month to come.' To say this and to let fly at Calandrino's shins with the stone were one and the same thing; and the latter, feeling the pain, lifted up his leg and began to puff and blow, but yet held his peace and fared on. Presently Buffalmacco took one of the flints he had picked up and said to Bruno, 'Look at this fine flint; here should go for Calandrino's loins!' So saying, he let fly and dealt him a sore rap in the small of the back with the stone. Brief, on this wise, now with one word and now with another, they went pelting him up the Mugnone till they came to the San Gallo gate, where they threw down the stones they had gathered and halted awhile at the custom house.

The officers, forewarned by them, feigned not to see Calandrino and let him pass, laughing heartily at the jest, whilst he, without stopping, made straight for his house, which was near the Canto alla Macina, and fortune so far favored the cheat that none accosted him, as he came up the stream and after through the city, as, indeed, he met with few, for that well nigh every one was at dinner. Accordingly, he reached his house, thus laden, and as chance would have it, his wife, a fair and virtuous lady, by name Mistress Tessa, was at the stairhead. Seeing him come and somewhat provoked at his long tarriance, she began

to rail at him, saying 'Devil take the man? Wilt thou never think to come home betimes? All the folk have already dined whenas thou comest back to dinner.' Calandrino, hearing this and finding that he was seen, was overwhelmed with chagrin and vexation and cried out, 'Alack, wicked woman that thou art, wast thou there? Thou hast undone me; but, by God His faith, I will pay thee therefor!' Therewithal he ran up to a little saloon he had and there disburthened himself of the mass of stones he had brought home; then, running in a fury at his wife, he laid hold of her by the hair throwing her down at his feet, cuffed and kicked her in every part as long as he could wag his arms and legs, without leaving her a hair on her head or a bone in her body that was not beaten to a mash, nor did it avail her aught to cry him mercy with clasped hands.

Meanwhile Bruno and Baffalmacco, after laughing awhile with the keepers of the gate, proceeded with slow step to follow Calandrino afar off and presently coming to the door of his house, heard the cruel beating he was in act to give his wife; whereupon, making a show of having but then come back, they called Calandrino, who came to the window, all asweat and red with anger and vexation, and prayed them come up to him. Accordingly, they went up, making believe to be somewhat vexed, and seeing the room full of stones and the lady, all torn and dishevelled and black and blue in the face for bruises, weeping piteously in one corner of the room, whilst Calandrino sat in another, untrussed and panting like one forspent, eyed them awhile, then said, 'What is this, Calandrino? Art thou for building, that we see all these stones here? And Mistress Tessa, what aileth her? It seemeth thou hast beaten her. What is all this ado? Calandrino, outwearied with the weight of the stones and the fury with which he had beaten his wife, no less than with chagrin for the luck which himseemed he had lost, could not muster breath to given them aught but broken words in reply; wherefore, as he delayed to answer, Baffalmacco went on, 'Hark-

ye, Calandrino, whatever other cause for anger thou mightest have had, thou shouldst not have fooled us as thou hast done, in that, after thou hadst carried us off to seek with thee for the wonder-working stone, thou leftest us in the Mugnone, like a couple of gulls, and madest off home, without saying so much as God be with you or Devil; the which we take exceeding ill; but assuredly this shall be the last trick thou shalt ever play us.'

Therewithal, Calandrino, enforcing himself, answered, 'Comrades, be not angered; the case standeth otherwise than as you deemed. I (unlucky wretch that I am!) had found the stone in question, and you shall hear if I tell truth. When first you questioned one another of me, I was less than half a score yards distant from you; but, seeing that you made off and saw me not, I went on before you and came back hither, still keeping a little in front of you.' Then, beginning from the beginning, he recounted to them all that they had said and done, first and last, and showed them how the stones had served his back and shins; after which, 'And I may tell you,' continued he, 'that, whenas I entered in at the gate, with all these stones about me which you see here, there was nothing said to me albeit you know how vexatious and tiresome these gatekeepers use to be in wanting to see everything; more by token that I met by the way several of my friends and gossips, who are still wont to accost me and invite me to drink; but none of them said a word to me, no, nor half a word, as those who saw me not. At last, being come home hither, this accursed devil of a woman presented herself before me, for that, as you know, women cause everything lose its virtue, wherefore I, who might else have called myself the luckiest man in Florence, am become the most unlucky. For this I have beaten her as long as I could wag my fists and I know not what hindereth me from slitting her weasand, accursed be the hour when first I saw her and when she came to me in this house.' Then, flaming out into fresh anger, he offered to rise and beat her anew.

Bruno and Baffalmacco, hearing all this, made believe to marvel exceedingly and often confirmed that which Calandrino said, albeit they had the while so great a mind to laugh that they were like to burst; but, seeing him start up in a rage to beat his wife again, they rose upon him and withheld him, avouching that the lady was nowise at fault, but that he had only himself to blame for that which had happened, since he knew that women caused things lose their virtue and had not bidden her beware of appearing before him that day, and that God had bereft him of foresight to provide against this, either for that the adventure was not to be his or because he had had it in mind to cozen his comrades, to whom he should have discovered the matter, as soon as he perceived that he had found the stone. Brief, after many words, they made peace, not without much ado, between him and the woebegone lady and went their ways, leaving him disconsolate, with the house full of stones."

Befriending His Enemy

"IT is a very certain thing (if credit may be given to the report of divers Genoese and others who have been in those countries) that there was aforetime in the parts of Cattajo a man of noble lineage and rich beyond compare, called Nathan, who, having an estate adjoining a highway whereby as of necessity passed all who sought to go from the Ponant to the Levant or from the Levant to the Ponant, and being a man of great and generous soul and desirous that it should be known by its works, assembled a great multitude of artificers and let build there, in a little space of time, one of the fairest and greatest and richest palaces that had ever been seen, the which he caused excellently well furnish with all that was apt unto the reception and entertainment of gentleman. Then, having a great and goodly household, he there received and honorably entertained, with joyance and good cheer, whosoever came and went; and in this praiseworthy usance he persevered insomuch that not only the Levant, but well nigh all the Ponant, knew him by report. He was already full of years nor was therefor grown weary of the practice of hospitality, when it chanced that his fame reached the ears of a young man of a country not far from his own, by name Mithridanes, who, knowing himself no less rich than Nathan and waxing envious of his renown and his virtues, bethought himself either to eclipse or shadow them with greater liberality. Accordingly, letting build a palace like unto that of Nathan, he proceeded to do the most unbounded courtesies that ever any did to whosoever came or went about those parts, and in short time he became without doubt very famous.

It chanced one day that, as he abode all alone in the mid-court of his palace, there came in, by one of the gates, a poor woman, who sought of him an alms and had it; then coming in again to him by the second, she had of him another alms, and so on for twelve times in succession; but, whenas she returned for the thirteenth time, he said to her, 'Good woman, thou art very diligent in this thine asking,' and natheless gave her an alms. The old crone, hearing these words, exclaimed, 'O liberality of Nathan, how marvellous art thou! For that, entering in by each of the two-and-thirty gates which his palace hath, and asking of him an alms, never for all that he showed, was I recognized of him, and still I had it; whilst here, having as yet come in but at thirteen gates, I have been both recognized and chidden.' So saying, she went her ways and returned thither no more. Mithridanes, hearing the old woman's words, flamed up into a furious rage, as he who held that which he heard of Nathan's fame a diminishment of his own, and fell to saying, 'Alack, woe is me! When shall I attain to Nathan's liberality in great things, let alone overpass it, as I seek to do, seeing that I cannot approach him in the smallest? Verily, I weary myself in vain, an I remove him not from the earth; wherefore, since eld carrieth him not off, needs must I with mine own hands do it without delay.'

Accordingly, rising upon that motion, he took horse with a small company, without communicating his design to any and came after three days whereas Nathan abode. He arrived there at eventide and bidding his followers make a show of not being with him and provide themselves with lodging, against they should hear farther from him, abode alone at no great distance from the fair palace, where he found Nathan all unattended, as he went walking for his diversion, without any pomp of apparrel, and knowing him not, asked him if he could inform him where Nathan dwelt. 'My son,' answered the latter cheerfully, 'there is none in these parts who is better

able than I to show thee that; wherefore, whenas it pleaseth thee, I will carry thee thither.' Mithridanes rejoined that this would be very acceptable to him, but that, an it might be, he would fain be neither seen nor known of Nathan; and the latter said, 'That also will I do, since it pleaseth thee.' Mithridanes accordingly dismounted and repaired to the goodly palace, in company with Nathan, who quickly engaged him in most pleasant discourse. There he caused one of his servants take the young man's horse and putting his mouth to his ear, charged him take order with all those of the house, so none should tell the youth that he was Nathan; and so was it done. Moreover, he lodged him in a very goodly chamber, where none saw him, save those whom he had deputed to his service, and let entertain him with the utmost honor, himself bearing him company.

After Mithridanes had abidden with him awhile on this wise, he asked him (albeit he held him in reverence as a father) who he was; to which Nathan answered, 'I am an unworthy servant of Nathan, who have grown old with him from my childhood, nor hath he ever advanced me to otherwhat than that which thou seest me; wherefore, albeit every one else is mighty well pleased with him, I for my part have little cause to thank him.' These words afforded Mithridanes some hope of availing with more certitude and more safety to give effect to his perverse design, and Nathan very courteously asking him who he was and what occasion brought him into those parts and proffering him his advice and assistance insomuch as lay in his power, he hesitated awhile to reply, but, presently, resolving to trust himself to him, he with a long circuit of words required him first of secrecy and after of aid and counsel and entirely discovered to him who he was and wherefore and on what motion he came. Nathan, hearing his discourse and his cruel design, was inwardly all disordered; but nevertheless, without much hesitation, he answered him with an undaunted

mind and a firm countenance, saying, 'Mithridanes, thy father was a noble man and thou showest thyself minded not to degenerate from him, in having entered upon so high an emprise as this thou hast undertaken, to wit, to be liberal unto all; and greatly do I commend the jealously thou bearest unto Nathan's virtues, for that, were there many such, the world, that is most wretched, would soon become good. The design that thou hast discovered to me I will without fail keep secret; but for the accomplishment thereof I can rather give thee useful counsel than great help; the which is this. Thou mayst from here see a coppice, maybe half a mile hence, wherein Nathan well nigh every morning walketh all alone, taking his pleasure there a pretty long while; and there it will be a light matter to thee to find him and do thy will of him. If thou slay him, thou must, so thou mayst return home without hindrance, get thee gone, not by that way thou camest, but by that which thou wilt see issue forth of the coppice on the left hand, for that, albeit it is somewhat wilder, it is nearer to thy country and safer for thee.'

Mithridanes, having received this information and Nathan having taken leave of him, privily let his companions, who had, like himself, taken up their sojourn in the palace, know where they should look for him on the morrow; and the new day come, Nathan, whose intent was nowise at variance with the counsel he had given Mithridanes nor was anywise changed, betook himself alone to the coppice, there to die. Meanwhile, Mithridanes arose and taking his bow and his sword, for other arms he had not, mounted to horse and made for the coppice, where he saw Nathan from afar go walking all alone. Being resolved, ere he attacked him, to seek to see him and hear him speak, he ran towards him and seizing him by the fillet he had about his head, said, 'Old man, thou art dead.' Whereto Nathan answered no otherwhat than, 'Then have I merited it.' Mithridanes, hearing his voice and looking him in the face, knew him forthright for him who had so lovingly received him

and familiarly companied with him and faithfully counselled him; whereupon his fury incontinent subsided and his rage was changed into shame. Accordingly, casting away the sword, which he had already pulled out to smite him, and lighting down from his horse, he ran, weeping, to throw himself at Nathan's feet and said to him, 'Now, dearest father, do I manifestly recognize your liberality, considering with what secrecy you are come hither to give me your life, whereof, without any reason, I showed myself desirous, and that to yourself; but God, more careful of mine honor than I myself, hath, in the extremest hour of need, opened the eyes of my understanding, which vile envy had closed. Wherefore, the readier you have been to comply with me, so much the more do I confess myself beholden to do penance for my default. Take, then, of me the vengeance which you deem conformable to my sin.'

Nathan raised Mithridanes to his feet and tenderly embraced and kissed him, saying, 'My son, it needeth not that thou shouldst ask nor that I should grant forgiveness of thine emprise, whatever thou choosest to style it, whether wicked or otherwise; for that thou pursuedst it, not of hatred, but to win to be held better. Live, then, secure from me and be assured that there is no man alive who loveth thee as I do, having regard to the loftness of thy soul, which hath given itself, not to the amassing of monies, as do the covetous, but to the expenditure of those that have been amassed. Neither be thou ashamed of having sought to slay me, so thou mightest become famous, nor think that I marvel thereat. The greatest emperors and the most illustrious kings have, with well nigh none other art than that of slaying, not one man, as thou wouldst have done, but an infinite multitude of men, and burning countries and razing cities, enlarged their realms and consequently their fame; wherefore, an thou wouldst, to make thyself more famous, have slain me only, thou diddest no new nor extraordinary thing, but one much used.'

Mithridanes, without holding himself excused of his perverse design, commended the honorable excuse found by Nathan and came, in course of converse with him, to say that he marvelled beyond measure how he could have brought himself to meet his death and have gone so far as even to give him means and counsel to that end; whereto quoth Nathan, 'Mithridanes, I would not have thee marvel at my resolution nor at the counsel I gave thee, for that, since I have been mine own master and have addressed myself to do that same thing which thou hast undertaken to do, there came never any to my house but I contented him, so far as in me lay, of that which was required of me by him. Thou camest hither, desirous of my life; wherefore, learning that thou soughtest it, I straightway determined to give it thee, so thou mightest not be the only one to depart hence without his wish; and in order that thou mightest have thy desire, I gave thee such counsel as I thought apt to enable thee to have my life and not lose thine own; and therefore I tell thee once more and pray thee, an it please thee, take it and satisfy thyself thereof. I know not how I may better bestow it. These fourscore years have I occupied it and used it about my pleasures and my diversions, and I know that, in the course of nature, according as it fareth with other men and with things in general it can now be left me but a little while longer; wherefore I hold it far better to bestow it by way of gift, like as I have still given and expended my [other] treasures, than to seek to keep it until such time as it shall be taken from me by nature against my will. To give an hundred years is no great boon; how much less, then, is it to give the six or eight I have yet to abide here? Take it, then, an it like thee. Prithee, then, take it, an thou have a mind thereto; for that never yet, what while I have lived here, have I found any who hath desired it, nor know I when I may find any such, an thou, who demandest it, take it not. And even should I chance to find any one, I know that, the longer I

keep it, the less worth will it be; wherefore, ere it wax sorrier, take it, I beseech thee.'

Mithridanes was sore abashed and replied, 'God forbid I should, let alone take and sever from you a thing of such price as your life, but even desire to do so, as but late I did, — your life, whose years far from seeking to lessen, I would willingly add thereto of mine own!' Whereto Nathan straightway rejoined, 'And art thou indeed willing, it being in thy power to do it, to add of thy years unto mine and in so doing, to cause me do for thee that which I never yet did for any man, to wit, take of thy good, I who never yet took aught of others?' 'Ay am I,' answered Mithridanes in haste. 'Then,' said Nathan, 'thou must do as I shall bid thee. Thou shalt take up thine abode, young as thou art, here in my house and bear the name of Nathan, whilst I will betake myself to thy house and let still call myself Mithridanes.' Quoth Mithridanes, 'An I knew how to do as well as you have done and do, I would, without hesitation, take that which you proffer me; but, since meseemeth very certain that my actions would be a diminishment of Nathan's fame and as I purpose not to mar in another that which I know not how to order in myself, I will not take it.' These and many other courteous discourses having passed between them, they returned, at Nathan's instance, to the latter's palace, where he entertained Mithridanes with the utmost honor sundry days, heartening him in his great and noble purpose with all manner of wit and wisdom. Then, Mithridanes desiring to return to his own house with his company, he dismissed him, having throughly given him to know that he might never avail to outdo him in liberality.''

The Story of Griselda

"IT is now a great while agone since the chief of the house among the Marquesses of Saluzzo was a youth called Gualtieri, who, having neither wife nor children, spent his time in nought but hunting and hawking nor had any thought of taking a wife nor of having children; wherein he deserved to be reputed very wise. The thing, however, not pleasing his vassals, they besought him many times to take a wife, so he might not abide without an heir nor they without a lord, and offered themselves to find him one of such a fashion and born of such parents that good hopes might be had of her and he be well content with her; whereto he answered, 'My friends, you constrain me unto that which I was altogether resolved never to do, considering how hard a thing it is to find a wife whose fashions sort well with one's own humor and how great an abundance there is of the contrary sort and how dour a life is his who happeneth upon a woman not well suited unto him. To say that you think, by the manners and fashions of the parents, to know the daughters wherefrom you argue to give me a wife such as will please me is a folly, since I know not whence you may avail to know their fathers nor yet the secrets of their mothers; and even did you know them, daughters are often unlike their parents. However, since it e'en pleaseth you to bind me in these chains, I am content to do your desire; but, that I may not have occasion to complain of other than myself, if it prove ill done, I mean to find a wife for myself, certifying you that, whomsoever I may take me, if she be not honored of you as your lady and mistress, you shall prove, to

your cost, how much it irketh me to hove at your entreaty taken a wife against mine own will.'

The good honest men replied that they were content, so he would but bring himself to take a wife. Now the fashions of a poor girl, who was of a village near to his house, had long pleased Gualtieri, and himseeming she was fair enough, he judged that he might lead a very comfortable life with her; wherefore, without seeking farther, he determined to marry her and sending for her father, who was a very poor man, agreed with him to take her to wife. This done, he assembled all his friends of the country round and said to them, 'My friends, it hath pleased and pleaseth you that I should dispose me to take a wife and I have resigned myself thereto, more to complease you than of any desire I have for marriage. You know what you promised me, to wit, that you would be content with and honor as your lady and mistress her whom I should take, whosoever she might be; wherefore the time is come when I am to keep my promise to you and when I would have you keep yours to me. I have found a damsel after mine own heart and purpose within some few days hence to marry her and bring her home to my house; wherefore do you bethink yourselves how the bridefeast may be a goodly one and how you may receive her with honor, on such wise that I may avouch myself contented of your promise, even as you will have cause to be of mine.' The good folk all answered joyfully that this liked them well and that, be she who he would, they would hold her for lady and mistress and honor her as such in all things; after which they all addressed themselves to hold fair and high and glad festival and on like wise did Gualtieri, who let make ready very great and goodly nuptials and bade thereto many his friends and kinsfolk and great gentlemen and others of the neighborhood. Moreover, he let cut and fashion store of rich and goodly apparel, after the measure of a damsel who seemed to him like of her person to the young woman he was purposed

to marry, and provided also rings and girdles and a rich and goodly crown and all that behoveth unto a bride.

The day come that he had appointed for the nuptials, Gualtieri towards half tierce mounted to horse, he and all those who were come to do him honor, and having ordered everything needful, 'Gentlemen,' quoth he, 'it is time to go fetch the bride.' Then, setting out with all his company, he rode to the village and betaking himself to the house of the girl's father, found her returning in great haste with water from the spring, so she might after go with other women to see Gualtieri's bride come. When the marquess saw her, he called her by name, to wit, Griselda, and asked her where her father was; to which she answered bashfully, 'My lord, he is within the house.' Thereupon Gualtieri dismounted and bidding all await him, entered the poor house alone, where he found her father, whose name was Giannucolo, and said to him, 'I am come to marry Griselda, but first I would fain know of her somewhat in thy presence.' Accordingly, he asked her if, an he took her to wife, she would still study to please him, nor take umbrage at aught that he should do or say, and if she would be obedient, and many other like things, to all of which she answered ay; whereupon Gualtieri, taking her by the hand, led her forth and in the presence of all his company and of every one else, let strip her naked. Then, sending for the garments which he had let make, he caused forthright clothe and shoe her and would have her set the crown on her hair, all tumbled as it was; after which, all marvelling at this, he said, 'Gentlemen, this is she who I purpose shall be my wife, an she will have me to husband.' Then, turning to her, where she stood, all shamefast and confounded, he said to her, 'Griselda, wilt thou have me to thy husband?' To which she answered, 'Ay, my lord.' Quoth he, 'And I will have thee to my wife;' and espoused her in the presence of all. Then, mounting her on a palfrey, he carried her, honorably accompanied, to his mansion, where the nup-

tials were celebrated with the utmost splendor and rejoicing, no otherwise than as he had taken to wife the king's daughter of France.

The young wife seemed to have, together with her clothes, changed her mind and her manners. She was, as we have already said, goodly of person and countenance, and even as she was fair, on like wise she became so engaging, so pleasant and so well-mannered that she seemed rather to have been the child of some noble gentleman than the daughter of Giannucolo and a tender of sheep; whereof she made every one marvel who had known her aforetime. Moreover, she was so obedient to her husband and so dilligent in his service that he accounted himself the happiest and best contented man in the world; and on like wise she bore herself with such graciousness and such loving-kindness towards her husband's subjects that there was none of them but loved and honored her with his whole heart, praying all for her welfare and prosperity and advancement; and whereas they were used to say that Gualtieri had done as one of little wit to take her to wife, they now with one accord declared that he was the sagest and best-advised man alive, for that none other than he might ever have availed to know her high worth, hidden as it was under poor clothes and a rustic habit. Brief, it was no great while ere she knew so to do that, not only her husband's marquisate, but everywhere else, she made folk talk of her virtues and her welldoing and turned to the contrary whatsoever had been said against her husband on her account, whenas he married her.

She had not long abidden with Gualtieri ere she conceived with child and in due time bore a daughter, whereat he rejoiced greatly. But, a little after, a new thought having entered his mind, to wit, to seek, by dint of long tribulation and things unendurable, to make trial of her patience, he first goaded her with words, feigning himself troubled and saying that his vassels were exceeding ill content with her, by reason of her mean extraction,

especially since they saw that she bore children, and that they did nothing but murmur, being sore chagrined for the birth of her daughter. The lady, hearing this, replied without anywise changing countenance or showing the least distemperature, 'My lord, do with me that which thou deemest will be most for thine honor and solace, for that I shall be content with all, knowing, as I do, that I am of less account than they and that I was unworthy of this dignity to which thou hast advanced me of thy courtesy.' This reply was mighty agreeable to Gualtieri, for that he saw she was not uplifted into aught of pridefulness for any honor that himself or others had done her; but a little after, having in general terms told her that his vassals could not brook this girl that had been born of her, he sent to her a servingman of his whom he had lessoned and who said to her with very woeful countenance, 'Madam, an I would not die, needs must I do that which my lord commandeth me. He hath bidden me take this your daughter and.. ..' And said no more. The lady, hearing this and seeing the servant's aspect and remembering her of her husband's words, concluded that he had enjoined him put the child to death; whereupon, without changing countenance, albeit she felt a sore anguish at heart, she straightway took her from the cradle and having kissed and blessed her, laid her in the servant's arms, saying, 'Take her and punctually do that which thy lord hath enjoined thee; but leave her not to be devoured of the beasts and birds, except he command it thee.' The servant took the child and reported that which the lady had said to Gualteiri, who marvelled at her constancy and despatched him with the child to a kinswoman of his at Bologna, praying her to bring her up and rear her diligently, without ever saying whose daughter she was.

In course of time the lady again conceived and in due season bore a male child, to her husband's great joy; but, that which he had already done sufficing him not, he addressed himself to probe her to the quick with a yet sorer stroke and accordingly

said to her one day with a troubled air, 'Wife, since thou hast borne this male child, I have nowise been able to live in peace with these my people, so sore do they murmur that grandson of Giannucolo should become their lord after me; wherefore I misdoubt me, an I would not be driven forth of my domains, it will behove me do in this case that which I did other when and ultimately put thee away and take another wife.' The lady gave ear to him with a patient mind nor answered otherwhat than, 'My lord, study to content thyself and to satisfy thy pleasure and have no thought of me, for that nothing is dear to me save in so much as I see it please thee.' Not many days after, Gualtieri sent for the son even as he had sent for the daughter, and making a like show of having put him to death, despatched him to Bologna, there to be brought up, even as he had done with the girl; but the lady made no other countenance nor other words thereof than she had done of the girl; whereat Gualtieri marvelled sore and affirmed in himself that no other woman could have availed to do this that she did; and had he not seen her tender her children with the utmost fondness, what while it pleased him, he had believed that she did this because she recked no more of them; whereas in effect he knew that she did it of her discretion. His vassals, believing that he had caused put the children to death, blamed him sore, accounting him a barbarous man, and had the utmost compassion of his wife, who never answered otherwhat to the ladies who condoled with her for her children thus slain, than that which pleased him thereof who had begotten them pleased her also.

At last, several years being passed since the birth of the girl, Gualtieri, deeming it time to make the supreme trial of her endurance, declared, in the presence of his people, that he could no longer endure to have Griselda to wife and that he perceived that he had done ill and boyishly in taking her, wherefore he purposed, as far as in him lay, to make interest with the Pope to grant him a dispensation, so he might put her away and take another wife. For this he was roundly taken to task by many

men of worth, but answered them nothing save that needs must it be so. The lady, hearing these things and herseeming she must look to return to her father's house and maybe tend sheep again as she had done aforetime, what while she saw another woman in possession of him to whom she willed all her weal, sorrowed sore in herself; but yet, even as she had borne the other affronts of fortune, so with a firm countenance she addressed herself to bear this also. Gualtieri no great while after let come to him from Rome counterfeit letters of dispensation and gave his vassals to believe that the Pope had thereby licensed him to take another wife and leave Griselda; then, sending for the latter, he said to her, in presence of many, Wife, by concession made me of this Pope, I am free to take another wife and put thee away, and accordingly, for that mine ancestors have been great gentlemen and lords of this country, whilst thine have still been husbandmen, I mean that thou be no more my wife, but that thou return to Giannucolo his house with the dowry which thou broughtest me, and I will after bring hither another wife, for that I have found one more sorted to myself.'

The lady, hearing this, contained her tears, contrary to the nature of woman, though not without great unease, and answered, My lord, I ever knew my mean estate to be nowise sortable with your nobility, and for that which I have been with you I have still confessed myself indebted to you and to God, nor have I ever made nor held it mine, as given to me, but have still accounted it but as a loan. It pleaseth you to require it again and it must and doth please me to restore it to you. Here is your ring wherewith you espoused me; take it. You bid me carry away with me that dowry which I brought hither, which to do you will need no paymaster and I neither purse nor packhorse, for I have not forgotten that you had me naked, and if you account it seemly that this my body, wherein I have carried children begotten of you, be seen of all, I will begone naked; but I pray you, in requital of my maidenhead, which I brought hither and bear not hence with me, that it please you I may carry

away at the least one sole shift over and above my dowry.' Gualtieri, who had more mind to weep than to otherwhat, natheless kept a stern countenance and said, 'So be it; carry away a shift.' As many as stood around besought him to give her a gown, so that she who had been thirteen years and more his wife should not be seen go forth of his house on such mean and shameful wise as it was to depart in her shift; but their prayers all went for nothing; wherefore the lady, having commended them to God, went forth his house in her shift, barefoot and nothing on her head, and returned to her father, followed by the tears and lamentations of all who saw her. Giannucolo, who had never been able to believe it true that Gualtieri should entertain his daughter to wife and went in daily expectation of this event, had kept her the clothes which she had put off the morning that Gualtieri had married her and now brought them to her; whereupon she donned them and addressed herself as she had been wont to do, to the little offices of her father's house, enduring the cruel onslaught of hostile fortune with a stout heart.

Gualtieri, having done this, gave out to his people that he had chosen a daughter of one of the counts of Panago and letting make great preparations for the nuptials, sent for Griselda to come to him and said to her, 'I am about to bring home this lady, whom I have newly taken to wife, and mean, at this her first coming, to do her honor. Thou knowest I have no women about me who know how to array me the rooms nor to do a multitude of things that behove unto such a festival; wherefore do thou, who art better versed than any else in these household matters, order that which is to do here and let bid such ladies as it seemeth good to thee and receive them as thou wert mistress here; then, when the nuptials are ended, thou mayest begone back to thy house.' Albeit these words were all daggers to Griselda's heart, who had been unable to lay down the love she bore him as she had laid down her fair fortune, she replied, 'My lord, I am ready and willing. Then, in her coarse homespun clothes, entering the house, whenas she had a little before departed in her shift, she

fell to sweeping and ordering the chambers and letting place hangings and covercloths about the saloons and make ready the viands, putting her hand to everything, as she were some paltry serving-wench of the house, nor ever gave over till she had arrayed and ordered everything as it behoved. Thereafter, having let invite all the ladies of the country on Gualtieri's part, she awaited the day of the festival, which being come, with a cheerful countenance and the spirit and bearing of a lady of high degree, for all she had mean clothes on her back, she received all the ladies who came thither.

Meanwhile, Gualtieri, who had caused the two children be diligently reared in Bologna by his kinswoman (who was married to a gentleman of the Panago family), the girl being now twelve years old and the fairest creature that ever was seen and the boy six, had sent to his kinsman at Bologna, praying him be pleased to come to Saluzzo with his son and daughter and take order to bring with him a goodly honorable company and bidding him tell every one that he was carrying him the young lady to his wife, without otherwise discovering to any aught of who she was. The gentleman did as the marquess prayed him and setting out, with the girl and boy and a goodly company of gentlefolk, after some day's journey, arrived, about dinner-time, at Saluzzo, where he found all the countryfolk and many others of the neighborhood awaiting Gualtieri's new bride. The latter, being received by the ladies and come into the saloon where the tables were laid, Griselda came to meet her, clad as she was, and accosted her blithely, saying, 'Welcome and fair to my lady.' Thereupon the ladies (who had urgently, but in vain, besought Gualtieri to suffer Griselda to abide in a chamber or lend her one of the gowns that had been hers, so that she might not go thus before his guests) were seated at table and it was proceeded to serve them. The girl was eyed by every one and all declared that Gualtieri had made a good exchange; and among the rest Griselda commended her amain, both her and her young brother.

Gualtieri perceiving that the strangeness of the case in no

wise changed her and being assured that this proceeded not from lack of understanding, for that he knew her to be very quick of wit, himseemed he had now seen fully as much as he desired of his lady's patience and he judged it time to deliver her from the bitterness which he doubted not she kept hidden under her constant countenance; wherefore, calling her to himself he said to her, smiling, in the presence of every one, 'How deemest thou of our bride?' 'My lord,' answered she, 'I deem exceeding well of her, and if, as I believe, she is as discreet as she is fair, I doubt not a whit but you will live the happiest gentleman in the world with her; but I beseech you, as most I may, that you inflict not on her those pangs which you inflicted whilere on her who was sometime your; for methinketh she might scarce avail to endure them, both because she is younger and because she hath been delicately reared, whereas the other had been in continual fatigues from a little child.' Thereupon Gualtieri, seeing she firmly believed that the young lady was to be his wife nor therefor spoke anywise less than well, seated her by his side and said to her, 'Griselda, it is now time that thou reap the fruits of thy long patience and that those who have reputed me cruel and unjust and brutish should know that this which I have done I wrought to an end aforeseen, willing to teach thee to be a wife and to show them how to take and use one and at the same time to beget myself perpetual quiet, what while I had to live with thee; the which, whenas I came to take a wife, I was sore afraid might not betide me, and therefore, to make proof thereof, I probed and afflicted thee after such kind as thou knowest. And meseeming, for that I have never perceived that either in word or in deed hast thou departed from my pleasure, that I have of thee that solace which I desired, I purpose presently to restore thee, at one stroke, that which I took from thee at many and to requite thee with a supreme delight the pangs I have inflicted on thee. Wherefore with a joyful heart take this whom thou deemest my bride and her brother for thy children and mine; for these be they whom thou and many others have

long accounted me to have barbarously let put to death; and I am thy husband, who loveth thee over all else, believing I may vaunt me that there is none else who can be content of his wife as can I.'

So saying, he embraced her and kissed her; then, rising up, he betook himself with Griselda, who wept for joy, whereas the daughter, hearing these things, sat all stupefied, and tenderly embracing her and her brother, undeceived her and many others who were there. Thereupon the ladies arose from table, overjoyed, and withdrew with Griselda into a chamber, where, with happier augury, pulling off her mean attire, they clad her anew in a magnificent dress of her own and brought her again to the saloon, as a gentlewoman which indeed she appeared, even in rags. There she rejoiced in her children with wonder-great joy, and all being overjoyed at this happy issue, they redoubled in feasting and merrymaking and prolonged the festivities several days, accounting Gualtieri a very wise man, albeit they held the trials which he had made of his lady overharsh, nay, intolerable; but over all they held Griselda most sage. The Count of Panago returned, after some days, to Bologna, and Gualtieri taking Giannucolo from his labor, placed him in such estate as befitted his father-in-law, so that he lived in honor and great solace and so ended his days; whilst he himself, having nobly married his daughter, lived long and happily with Griselda, honoring her as most might be. What more can here be said save that even in poor cottages there rain down divine spirits from heaven, like as in princely palaces there be those who were worthier to tend swine than to have lordship over men? Who but Griselda could, with a countenance, not only dry, but cheerful, have endured the barbarous and unheard proofs made by Gualtieri? Which latter had not belike been ill requitted, had he happened upon one who, when he turned her out of doors in her shift, had let jumble her furbelows of another to such purpose that a fine gown had come of it."

W9-DBR-543